

Message Text

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44

ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 DHA-02 ISO-00 /100 W

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R 100400Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7305

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION UN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 1952

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, SW, LE

SUBJECT: SWEDEN RUNS INTO LEBANESE REFUGEE PROBLEM

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SWEDISH HOSPITALITY TO POLITICAL REFUGEES AND VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION HAS BEEN STRAINED TO BREAKING POINT IN RECENT WEEKS BY UNANNOUNCED ARRIVALS AT STOCKHOLM'S ARLANDA AIRPORT OF HUNDREDS OF ASSYRIAN-CHRISTIAN LEBANESE REFUGEES. GOS NOW SEEMS TO HAVE SUCCEEDED IN HALTING INFLUX BY APPEAL TO AIRLINES AND WARNING THEY MAY BE OBLIGED TO CARRY BACK UNWELCOME PASSENGERS AT OWN EXPENSE. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING LAST TWO MONTHS ABOUT 800 LEBANESE ASSYRIANS HAVE ARRIVED IN STOCKHOLM ON MAINLY MIDDLE EAST AIRLINES AND AUSTRIAN AIRLINES FLIGHTS AND WERE ALLOWED TO ENTER COUNTRY ON BASIS OF CLAIMS THEY WERE POLITICAL REFUGEES. LAST GROUPS CAME IN ON APRIL 1 AND 8 ON SOVIET AEROFLOT PLANES FROM MOSCOW AND THERE WERE REPORTS OF FURTHER 1,500 ON AEROFLOT WAITING

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LIST. PROBLEM WAS APPARENTLY AGGRAVATED BY BREAKDOWN OF LEBANESE

PASSPORT CONTROL AT BEIRUT AIRPORT AND WHOLESALE ISSUANCE OF VISAS BY SWEDISH HONRARY CONSUL, A LEBANESE CITIZEN, WHO HAS BEEN OPERATING UNSUPERVISED SINCE CLOSING OF SWEDISH EMBASSY IN BEIRUT. GOS NOW APPEARS TO HAVE STOPPED FLOOD OF REFUGEES BY WARNING AIRLINES THEY MAY BE OBLIGED TO CARRY BACK UNADMITTED PASSENGERS AT OWN EXPENSE. AEROFLOT OFFICE IN STOCKHOLM ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 9 THAT THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN BEIRUT HAVE BEEN ORDERED NOT TO FLY ANY MORE REFUGEES TO STOCKHOLM. EARLIER GOS ANNOUNCED THAT VISAS ISSUED IN BEIRUT WERE NO LONGER VALID. FUTURE OF LEBANESE ASSYRIANS ALREADY ADMITTED IS UNCERTAIN AND IT MAY TAKE MONTHS BEFORE THEIR STATUS IS CLARIFIED.

3. PRESENT PROBLEM IS AGGRAVATED BY EARLIER ADMISSION OF SOME 1,200 TURKISH ASSYRIANS WHO ARRIVED ON CHARTERED PLANES CLAIMING THEY WERE VICTIMS OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION. THEY ARE CHRISTIANS. AFTER LENGTHY INVESTIGATION, GOS DECIDED IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR TO LET THEM STAY. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS GOS INTRODUCED VISA REQUIREMENT FOR TURKEY WHICH STOPPED FLOW FROM THAT DIRECTION. HOWEVER, RELATIVES OF TURKISH ASSYRIANS WHO ARE ALREADY HERE HAVE CONTINUED TO TRICKLE IN FROM GERMANY. HAVING OBTAINED SWEDISH ASYLUM ASSYRIAN TURKS ARE REPORTEDLY ASTONISHED THAT THE SWEDISH AUTHORITIES WILL NOT PERMIT THEM TO MAKE PERSONAL TRIPS BACK TO TURKEY.

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